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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses moral development as an integral part of the educational process and development of college students. The paper's first section places the concept of development within a network of meaning that indicates "ethical development" to be redundant; i.e., if something enhances development, it is ethical, and if it is ethical, it enhances development. The second section proposes hypotheses for using the cognitive-development framework to encourage morality in students; however, these hypotheses indicate the manner in which behavioral-reinforcement theories and value clarification approaches can be in unity with the cognitive-development approach, rather than opposed to, or separate from it. The third section reviews previous studies in the ethical development of college students, and uses them to illustrate the ideas in sections one and two of this paper. (Contains 60 references.) (Author)

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Ethical Development during the College Years: Theory and Normative Implications for Practice

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Running head: ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE COLLEGE YEARS

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Abstract

The first section of this paper places the concept of "development" within a network of meaning that indicates "ethical development" to be redundant; i.e., if something enhances development, it is ethical, and if it is ethical, it enhances development. The second section proposes hypotheses for using the cognitive-developmental framework to encourage morality in students, however, these hypotheses indicate the manner in which behavioral-reinforcement theories and value clarification approaches can be in unity with the cognitive-developmental approach, rather than opposed to, or separate from it. The third section reviews previous studies in the ethical development of college students, and uses them to illustrate the ideas in sections one and two of this paper.

Ethical Development during the College Years:

Theory and Normative Implications for Practice

The first section of this paper will define the terms "development", "ethical", and "college years". The second section advocates an approach to assist college students to develop ethically, and the third section will begin with a review of past work in this field, and end with an appeal for your assistance[1].

The rationales I intend to use in constructing definitions and advocating a normative stance is that of dialectical reasoning. It is the type of reasoning Dewey used in describing the means-ends continuum (Dewey, 1974, 1975; Dewey & Tufts, 1909), or modern physicists in finding light to be simultaneously both particular and wave-like, and by the cognitive-developmentalists recognizing that a self and a society are interpenetrating systems (Mead, 1934; Baldwin, 1913; Piaget, 1970), separable only for heuristic purposes.

With this in mind, development is defined as both a person in the midst of change, and how a person should change; how a society changes, and how a society should change. The descriptive and the prescriptive are not tidy packages. As has been shown by modern philosophers of science (Kuhn, 1970a, 1970b; Cavell, 1969), the empirical and normative are not the strict dichotomy once thought. All views of scientific investigation, particularly in social science, but in the physical sciences as well, contain implicit assumptions about the who/what humans are; about the right or correct way to

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[1]To my readers and critics: For my own learning I would appreciate criticism of this article along these dimensions: 1) its accurate use of dialectical reasoning, 2) its accomplishment of integration and differentiation--does it bring unity to ideas previously at odds, does it bring forth any new or usefully different ideas, 3) its fairness to past and current theorists and their work, and 4) its caringness to past and current theorists and their work.

interpret phenomena, etc. Tacit in all developmental theories, and especially in Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) is a teleological view. There is an explicit, or implicit, emphasis that development is not only what does happen, but that it should happen; that development is the end, aim, or purpose of the human and humanity. This is most clear in Kohlberg's work "Development as the Aim of Education" (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972). Our aims are our moral "goods"; and whether the focus is a child or a parent, a teacher or a student, a physicist, a carpet layer, a girl scout troop, a college, a nation or a planet, the aim is development: progress for the better.

So how do we know what is change for the worse?, or what is stagnation?, or what is change for the better, i.e., development? Based on the constructionist approach, I recommend that the parties involved in a particular situation consult among themselves and reach a consensus through rational and empirical considerations on what represents development in a particular situation. This does not imply that I am a Kohlberg bugaboo, a value relativist, rather, implicit in my recommendation are the guides to judge development. The coming together as a community to make a decision represents love, unity, or greater integration; the intention to include all involved, through the use of rationality implies a focus on justice, dignity, and greater differentiation.

Self and Society. In constructive developmental thought, the self is viewed as a process; it is an interactive process between the structure and content of the organism and the structure and content of the environment. Primarily this environment is the social environment; no selves could be created without others, just as there could be no society without individuals. Two early philosopher-psychologists responsible for elaborating this view are Baldwin (1913) and Mead (1934). A modern protagonist of this position is Kegan (1982). In agreement with the emerging systems-theorists,

the cognitive-developmentalists see society represented in self, and self represented in society.

Mead stated that the "unity and structure of the complete self reflects the unity and structure of the social process as a whole..." (1934, p. 144), and that "the organized community or social group which give to the individual his unity of self may be called the 'generalized other'" (1934, p. 154). Baldwin put it this way, the "ego and alter are thus essentially social; each is a socius and each is an imitative creation. This give-and-take between the individual and his fellows, looked at generally, we may call the Dialectic of Personal Growth" (Baldwin, 1913, p. 15). Kegan's (1982, 1980) neo-Piagetian approach attributes the origins of constructive developmentalism to two of the theorists that have already been briefly reviewed herein, Baldwin and Mead, as well as John Dewey and, of course, Jean Piaget. Kegan defines constructive developmentalism as the union of "two separate Big Ideas": "constructivism (that persons or systems constitute or construct reality) and developmentalism (that organic systems evolve through eras according to regular principles of stability and change)" (1982, p. 8).

Ethical development. Based on that which is implicit above, "ethical" and "developmental" are redundant. If development is defined as "change for better", ethical means that which contributes to development; development of either the individual or the group (development of either simultaneously develops the other). Increasing cognitive skills (Piaget, 1936) is a moral activity; increasing justice reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984) is a moral activity; exercise of the body is a moral activity; integrating care and justice, being able to select a focus on needs or rights is a moral activity (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984); increasing social-perspective taking (Selman, 1980) is a moral activity.

This is incongruent with Kohlberg's point, in his famous essay, 'From is to Ought' (1981; ch. 4), that his theory is strictly one of "duties and rights (deontological)" (p. 169). Unavoidably implicit in his theory is a teleological aim: we ought to develop (cf. Kohlberg and Mayer, "Development as the aim of education", 1972). In the move toward dialectical reasoning, we find is and ought are merged, as are duties (deontology) and purposes (teleology). Development is both a right and a duty, as well as our purpose and aim.

The college years. Most colleges, and schools of any sort, advocate the primary focus of education to be the student, the learner. Cognitive developmentalism, and/or a systems-approach reminds us that we are interpenetrating systems, we see the student as part of many collectives: a college institution, a family, a nation, a world, a classroom. Ethical development of the college student implies the Deweyan concept of reconstructing society, that our purpose for having educational institutions is to contribute toward an ever-advancing civilization; in both the micro (the individual) and the macro (the collectives).

Summary. Thus, ethical development during the college years translates as: change for the better in the self attending college and/or in the ever-overlapping systems of which that self is a part.

Section Two

The Practice of Development on Campus.

The practice of development will be recommended from two foci: that of the individual and that of the collective. Understanding the process of moral development of the individual will be couched in the findings of the cognitive-developmentalists, although with some notable departures from party-line. To do so, a brief foray will be made into reviewing Kohlberg's stages of justice reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984; Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), with

ample use of Kegan's (1982) reinterpretation of constructive developmental theory. The first stage, Heteronomy, represents thinkers that do not realize that others have a point view different from their own. Piaget's "egocentrism" captures this well (the inability to take the perspective of another). When I asked my 4 year old what we should get Mommy for her birthday, he said "he-man", meaning a toy action figure based on a cartoon he liked. He was convinced she would really like this. The second stage, Instrumental, the person is able to take another perspective, but only in the concrete (cf. Kegan's imperial self, 1982). The child can predict what another's behavior will be, and whether that is materially advantageous or not, but due to the lack of abstract or formal operations, never anticipates what another's feelings would be. People functioning in this structure cannot take a look at what others' perspectives on them might be (the "third person perspective"). They do not "own" values, nor are they able to cognitively take a value as a mental object. The instrumentalist morally functions in Piaget's concrete operations, and thus is unable to appreciate the idea of a value, because it is an abstract entity. The third stage, the interpersonally normative, allows people to recognize and own abstract values, and to take another's perspective on themselves. The structuring of moral thought in this stage comes from the internalized voices of one's significant others. This stage captures the simple interpretation of Freud's superego. What is "right" is what the minister, parent, spouse, lover, friend, or girl/boy scout leader thinks is right. The fourth stage, that of the social system, finds the thinker able to take as object an interacting system of others, as well as to be able to view the self as an interactive system. A person now can objectify a value system, and has a self-chosen hierarchy of values. In a Christian example, the believer no longer solely has the voice of his favorite minister or priest in his head to guide him,

but has autonomously adopted the creed of a particular church. The fifth stage, that of social contract, recognizes simultaneous permeability of the self-system and the social-system. It is a society creating stage, rather than a society maintaining stage, therefore it is a self creating stage, rather than a self maintaining stage. It relates well to the concept of self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). For Kohlberg it the stage of principles, the stage that can see the purpose behind the rule. Stage-five actors, through the use of bilateral communication (Argyris, 1982), through the unforced-force of the most rational argument (Habermas, 1979), create just community. If one's view remains posited on the stages, Kohlberg's theory receives criticism for its narrow hierarchy and elitism, however, if one's view catches the illumination of the developmental movement (Kegan, 1982), of which stages are a heuristic, then one recognizes that individuals, regardless to what level they have currently evolved, have made progress from an earlier stage, and are on their way to the next.

Based on the above I will offer four hypotheses for assisting students in their ethical development. Hypothesis One: To move from heteronomy to instrumentality, behavioral techniques emphasizing material, concrete, extrinsic reward, can be utilized. By concrete contracting the child learns to be able to predict others action, and thus become instrumental in meeting his/her needs. Hypothesis Two: To assist movement from the instrumental to the interpersonally normative, the process of values clarification can be used: choose, prize, act (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966; Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1972) or think, feel, choose, communicate, act (Kirschenbaum, 1977). The exercises included in the many VC handbooks help students move from the concrete world of the instrumentalist to the abstract world of being able to hold a non-material value. Hypothesis Three: Kohlbergian dilemma discussions (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1977; Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersh, 1983) have

been shown to be effective across several stages, but can be particularly effective for the movement from the interpersonal to the social system. One reason for this is that an extrapolation of Kohlbergian theory indicates that the VC approach can assist someone to develop to transitional level between stage 3 interpersonalism and the stage 4 social system; what Kohlbergian's will recognize as 3/4 relativism (the ideas that values are not rational, but simple a matter of individual choice, i.e., one value is as good as any other; Kohlberg, 1981, ch. 1), but probably not beyond that level.

Hypothesis Four: Movement from the individual autonomy of stage 4 to the bilaterality and dialectical thought (Kegan, 1982) of stage 5 can be accomplished by applying Argyris' (1982) Model II methods: advocacy, illustration of reasoning, and invitation for inquiry (Diessner, January, 1987).

These four values education approaches (behavioral/reward; clarification; dilemma discussion; Argyris' Model II) can be correlated with the approaches generally used in value development in American colleges. Dalton, Barnett, & Healy (1982) in a major survey identified values transmission, values clarification, moral development, and moral action as the four main categories for value education utilized in college. 'Direct instruction', a term from behavioral education, parallels the transmission approach, in which "students are treated as reactors rather than as initiators" (Dalton et al., 1982, p.23). This is a 'telling of what is important' with either the reinforcer of a smiling professor, or even using quiz results. This approach helps people transition to, and feel secure in, Kohlberg's instrumental stage 2. Values clarification is that which helps students move into, and be supported in, the stage 3 interpersonal, and can help set up the transition to social-system stage 4 through the subjective relativism it engenders. What Dalton et al. (1982) refer to as "moral

development" is the work of the cognitive-developmentalists, and dilemma discussion with a person functioning in the social-system stage can be shown to be particularly effective in helping students move into stage 4, and build a community that supports them at that level. Although "moral action" can occur through any of these stages or be based on any of these approaches, Argyris' work (1982), concentrates on the person becoming a bilateral, open-systems, communicator, which actualizes Habermas' (1979) ideas of critical communicative action. It is this form of communicative action that helps allow for integrating or evaluating systems, and thus transitioning to the post-conventional stages of justice reasoning (stage 5).

Societal development. The above hypotheses, which are advocacies in need of better illustration, are aimed primarily at individual development. Simultaneous to the focus on the individual must be the focus on the social. The cognitive-developmentalists define the self and society as interpenetrating mirrors, and Kohlberg actualized this view through his work in developing the just community (Kohlberg, 1985; Powers, Higgins, & Kohlberg, in press); and we see other workers in this field advocating the creation of the caring community (Noddings, 1984; Gilligan, 1982). The point to be made here is that colleges and students need to work not only on individuals' development, but to create a classroom or a college (or a local community, or a world--remember the bumper sticker, "Think globally, act locally") that is also developing. A college can continuously evolve to become more caring, or more just or both. The focus on community is important for several reasons, two being: 1) the community acts to both challenge students to evolve, and to support students' current level of evolution (cf. Kegan's letting go, holding on; 1982); 2) the community is the milieu within which the student acts.

Section Three

Review of interventions in moral development

This review will focus on efforts to encourage ethical development during the college years. The majority of efforts that are reported in the scholarly literature involve cognitive-developmental approaches (Kohlberg, 1984; Perry, 1970; Sprinthall & McVay, 1987). Based on Kohlberg's theory of stages of justice reasoning, or Perry's development scheme, cognitive-developmental curricula have been empirically shown to impact the development of children (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975), college women (Erickson, 1975; Straub & Rodgers, 1978), education majors (Hurt, 1977), black peer counselors (Locke & Zimmerman, 1987) and general college populations (Boyd, 1976, 1980; Stephenson & Hunt, 1977). Additionally, rationales have been provided that indicate the impact cognitive-developmental education can have on post-college accomplishment (Sprinthall, Bertin, and Whiteley, 1982).

One aspect that is found universally among the cognitive developmental interventions is dilemma discussions. Several factors have been identified that relate to justice reasoning stage movement through discussion. College students show moral developmental progress when role playing a Kohlbergian moral dilemma with an "opponent" that used reasoning advanced from their own (Arbuthnot, 1975). This is particularly true if someone freely chooses to role-take another's opinion that is different from her/his own, and that opinion is developmentally advanced from his/her own, it is likely to encourage the dissonance that leads to stage change (Rhodes, Bailey, & McMillan, 1982). If the disparity between dilemma discussants is about "one third" of a stage (cf. Colby & Kohlberg, 1987 on moral stage concepts), then developmental progress is maximized over more, or less, disparity (Berkowitz, Gibbs, & Broughton, 1980).

It has been shown that student discussants with opposite opinions tend to understand each others reasoning better than discussants with similar

opinions, even though those with similar opinions believe they understand each other better (Tjosvold & Johnson, 1977). It appears that if people agree on a dilemma choice, then they seldom seek to understand each other's reasoning. If they don't agree, however, it seems more likely they will role-take the other's perspective. Although stage disparity between discussants is an important factor for development, simply having a group of discussants of mixed stages isn't sufficient to encourage stage development (Howard & Wilk, 1986); rather, the more transactive ("reasoning that operates on the reasoning of another") the discussion is, the more likely development will occur (Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983). A non-directed group of dilemma discussants may, however, show increasing change in defining or organizing their values (Howard & Wilk, 1986). Although prototypical Kohlbergian higher education interventions directly teach the stage theory of justice reasoning (Boyd, 1976, 1980), it is notable that with 4-6 hours of training on the Kohlberg theory, only 17% of college students correctly identify the stage scores of their own protocols (Arbuthnot, 1979).

Studies of the relationship between cognitive and moral judgment find that level of Piagetian cognitive development of an individual sets a ceiling for moral reasoning level (Faust & Arbuthnot, 1978), and that formal operations may be necessary to make principled judgments (Cauble, 1976). Research with elementary age children confirm that logical operations precede justice reasoning operations of similar structure (Walker, 1980; Walker & Richards, 1979). A practical implication of this may be found in Haan (1985): experience of social disequilibria may be more powerful in promoting moral stage change than experience of cognitive disequilibria.

Other studies illuminate relationships of safety needs to moral stage change; creativity and moral development; and attributions of responsibility

and the number of extracurricular activities to stage preference. Green (1981) found that a moderate to high level of resolved safety need, in Maslow's conceptualization, is correlated with higher levels of moral cognition. This implies that to experience disequilibria in such a way as to be able to reorganize the structure of moral thought, a person must feel physically and psychologically secure. Because higher stages of justice reasoning are more "flexible" in applying principles/rules of fairness, it has been suggested that educating for creativity may impact moral cognitive development (Doherty & Corsini, 1976). A sense of humor is also important for moral development. Olejnik and LaRue's work (1980) shows that when someone is emoting positive affect they prefer higher stages of moral judgment than if they are in a negative or neutral affective condition.

Biggs and Barnett (1981) examined fresh-year students, with both relatively low and high initial Defining Issues Test (DIT) scores, a measure of justice reasoning stage preference (Rest, 1979). It was found that the low scorers' senior year DIT scores were positively related to the degree they attributed responsibility to themselves; whereas high scoring students had senior year DIT scores negatively related to the amount of extracurricular activities in which they engaged (Biggs & Barnett, 1981). Students, however, perceive extracurricular "experience" (which is a different category than extracurricular "activities" in Biggs & Barnett), particularly their living environment, as highly impactive on their reasoning about moral issues (Whiteley, 1980a).

Moral cognitive developmental education has concentrated on the structure of moral development, yet it appears that altering the content of dilemmas under discussion affects both structure and behavior. Zeidler & Schafer (1984) found that the content of dilemmas effects ability to prefer principled reasoning, e.g., science majors were shown to have equal Defining

Issues Test (Rest, 1979) scores with non-science majors; but on specific non-technical environmental issues science majors preferred significantly more principled reasoning than did non-science majors. Likewise, Houston's research (1983) indicates that using specific content about cheating in Kohlbergian moral dilemma discussion can decrease cheating, but that dilemma discussion on other topics may not effect cheating behavior.

Perhaps the two largest attempts focussed on moral development among college students in the past decade are the Sierra Project (Whiteley, 1980b) at UCal Irvine and the entire Alverno College (Mentowski, 1988). The Sierra project is holistic in the sense that the intervention is aimed at an entire college dormitory, Sierra Hall, and thus impacted the student volunteers on a 24 hour basis for a full 9 month college year. Although students elected to be in Sierra Hall, they were required to take a 4 credit course (Social Ecology: Moral Development and Just Communities) each quarter, around which the intervention was centered. Additionally, they could elect a 2 credit "lab" course, in which they were involved for 5 hours a week in a learning/service opportunity in the surrounding community. The Social Ecology course, besides emphasizing Kohlbergian discussion techniques, had a carefully sequenced series of modules aimed at survival skills, community building, conflict resolution, social perspective taking, socialization, life and career planning, sex-role choices, assertiveness, and community service (Whiteley & Loxley, 1980).

Whereas UCal Irvine's Sierra project directly served 18 year old fresh-year students of mixed gender, Alverno College's intervention for values development is college wide, gender specific (it is a women's college), and serves non-traditional age groups. UC Irvine is a relatively new public university, and Alverno is a century old private school aimed at preparing women for professional careers. At Alverno

> valuing is explicitly defined through six progressively more complex levels that are taught and assessed in over 100 courses across the curriculum. Students identify and confront their own values; practice identifying value systems in humanistic works and historical and societal contexts; engage in self-assessment, peer assessment, and faculty assessment of valuing in decision making in a variety of professional contexts; and practice identifying the values inherent in a discipline or profession in both theory and practice. (Mentowski, 1988, p.94)

Based on the initial definition of ethical development (that with is ethical is developmental, and vice versa) put forth in part one of this paper, clearly both Sierra and Alverno are practicing it. Both projects do some values transmission, or reinforcing of the project directors' values (referred to as stage 2 values education in section 2 above). At a minimum they "tell" their students that values and development are both important. Both explicitly teach values clarification, or the stage 3 ability to be able to identify personal, abstract values. Both projects use cognitive developmental techniques of dilemma discussion, that help students organize their values in a system of values, or autonomously adopt the values of systems they plan to enter (e.g., professional ethics in future careers). I have not accessed data to inform me whether either Model II communication occurs among faculty and students, or among faculty, at either institution, but both projects espouse adherence to the governing variables of seeking and offering valid information, free and informed choice, internal commitment to choice, and regular monitoring of implementation of choice.

I will end with a personal plea for assistance. I am involved in planning a major intervention to assist student value development in a small 4 year public college campus, and would like critical feedback on the ideas

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presented in this paper, and recommendations and advice of how to implement the project.

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